Vocabulary List:

The following vocabulary words are those most likely to be used when students visit Wind Cave National Park. They are included here for use by teachers and/or students. You may want to incorporate them into the spelling curriculum or use them for dictionary work before visiting the park. Students should leave Wind Cave National Park with an understanding of these words and concepts.

acid - a compound that reacts with a substance by eating or dissolving it away. For example: carbonic acid can dissolve limestone.

adapt - to change or adjust to new surroundings or conditions.

adaptation - a structure or behavior that enables a plant or animal to live successfully in its environment.

barometric - air or atmospheric pressure.

boxwork - a speleothem or cave decoration which is a fragile, honeycomb-shaped structure of calcite attached to the Walls and ceilings of the cave.

calcite - calcium carbon ate, the predominate mineral in limestone, found in the cave in a variety of crystalline forms.

carbon dioxide (CO₂) - an odorless, colorless gas formed by living or decaying plants and animals; the bubbles in soft drinks.

carnivore - a meat-eater; an animal that only eats animals.

coniferous - trees that are predominantly evergreen and are cone-bearing.

dissolve - to disappear into a liquid; to merge with a liquid.

ecology - the study of the interrelationships between living things and the relationships between organisms and their physical environment.

ecosystem - a living community of plants and animals and the physical environment (air, water, sunlight, soil) around them.

effect - to cause, to come into being; anything brought about by a cause.

environment - surroundings; all of the conditions surrounding and affecting the development of an organism.

evaporation - the loss of water; change of state from liquid water to water vapor.

exotic - foreign, introduced into an area where it does not naturally occur.

extinct - no longer in existence.

geologist - a scientist who studies the history of the earth as recorded in rocks and landform.

habitat - the place where a plant or animal lives.

herbivore - a plant-eater; an animal that only eats plants.

karst - land that has caves, underground rivers and springs.

limestone - a rock formed of sea sediment consisting mainly of the skeletons of marine or aquatic creatures.

native - a plant or animal that occurs in a region naturally.

niche - an especially suitable place to live.

omnivore - an animal that eats both plants and animals.

precipitation - water droplets or ice particles condensed from clouds that fall to the earth's surface in the form of rain or snow.

predator - an animal that seizes and kills another animal for food.

preserve - to protect from harm or danger; a place where animals and plants are kept for protection.

prey - an animal that is seized by a predator.

refuge - a safe place for plants and animals to live.

speleothem - a decoration in a cave, for example: boxwork, stalactite or stalagmite.

stress - a force that exerts or applies pressure.

survival - to remain alive or in existence.

system - a set or arrangement of things so related as to form a whole.

water table - the level or depth in the ground where the rock is completely filled with water and there are no air spaces.